The New
PLAY SOCIETY

" . . . to establish a living theatre in Canada on a professional but non-profit basis."

DORA MAVOR MOORE, founder and director

JUNE 20 - AUGUST 3, 1979

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THE NEW PLAY SOCIETY, 1946-1971

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1979

The New Play Society was founded in August 1946 by Dora Mavor Moore as an extension of her amateur theatre group, the Village Players (1938 - 1946). It was formed primarily "to establish a living theatre in Canada on a professional but non-profit basis;" to furnish a training ground for Canadian actors and actresses; to provide work for those with professional theatrical training; and, using the community as a focal point, to develop active participants in and interested spectators for the theatre in Canada. The venture began with $2,000.00 in war bonds sent by Mrs. Moore's three sons who were serving in the Second World War. The plan was to produce a regular repertoire of plays of a professional standard using Canadian talent, and using a regular company of players who were on a weekly payroll.

In its first ten years, the New Play Society produced over seventy plays including nine original Canadian plays. In 1952 it was incorporated under Ontario law as an educational, non-profit organization with a Board of Directors and Dora Mavor Moore as the Managing Director. Her son, Mavor Moore, who had joined the Society in an official capacity shortly after it was founded, became its Director of Productions in 1954. During these early years, Mrs. Moore contributed some of her own meagre funds to keep the Society afloat, and many others also donated their services as actors, actresses, directors, accountants, and members of the Board.

During this same decade, the New Play Society assisted in developing the Shakespearian Festival at Stratford. Mrs. Moore's personal friendship with Sir Tyrone Guthrie was instrumental in bringing him to Canada. As he writes in his book, Renown at Stratford : "It was through her [Dora Mavor Moore] that I was invited by the Stratford Committee to come to Canada, meet its members and consider a possible plan. This was in July, 1952." The New Play Society also provided Stratford with Toronto office space, audition accommodation at its Yonge St. headquarters, and space to make costumes. In addition approximately sixty percent of the first cast had been associated with the N.P.S.

By the 1955/56 season, however, the Society was experiencing severe financial difficulties. Ironically, Spring Thaw, the brilliant satirical review which had become an annual event after its inception in 1948, was now having record runs and clearing respectable sums. But the stage productions, including the critically acclaimed Sunshine Town and The Optimist, Mavor Moore's musicals of 1955 and 1956, were not financial successes. The Society reluctantly concluded that the professional endeavours, with the exception of Spring Thaw, would have to be curtailed and that future efforts would be concentrated on the N.P.S. School which had been founded in 1950.

The educational and training aspects of theatre had always been a major goal of the Society. The N.P.S. was, in fact, one of the first theatre companies in Canada to have its own school attached. The advent of television in the early 1950's created new careers for many formerly under-employed actors. Stratford also provided opportunities that had not been previously available in Canada to professional theatre people. As careers for actors opened up, interest in the school burgeoned. From the mid 1950's until the day it closed in 1968, the school had more applications than it could handle. In addition, the school sponsored numerous courses in theatre which were in some cases the first offered in Canada. Numerous plays were produced, including plays which were written, performed and directed by the students. "Studio productions" of other plays - usually Canadian - employed both professional and student actors. The most ambitious project of all was the series "Director's Stage Productions." With a small grant from the Ontario Arts Council, three professional directors were enabled to choose contemporary plays and to hire some professional actors who worked with the students from the school.

In 1971, after several years of relative inactivity, with its founder approaching her eighty-fourth year, the N.P.S. formally surrendered its charter. It had achieved its chief aim, the establishment of a thriving theatre in English Canada.

BEFORE THE NEW PLAY SOCIETY (CASE 1)

Like most significant movements, the New Play Society did not spring full-blown into existence. It was the culmination of long years of training and hard work on the part of its founder, Dora Mavor Moore.

Daughter of the learned Professor James Mavor, Dora first felt the lure of the theatre as a young and somewhat reluctant student attending the University of Toronto from 1906 to 1909. During these years she acted in several university plays and starred as Rosalind in a production of As You Like It put on by the University College Women's Dramatic Society. Many years later she was to say that "it was the only thing I had ever been told was right". At the same time she began to help with community drama productions, assisting in a children's version of Maeterlinck's The Blue Bird at the Central Neighborhood House in 1908. By 1911 she was attending the Margaret Eaton School of Literature and Expression and had secured the role of Kate Hardcastle in the school's production of She Stoops to Conquer. Her training under Emma Scott Raff at the school enabled her to win a scholarship to Britain's Royal Academy of Dramatic Art and she became its first Canadian graduate. From R.A.D.A. she went to New York to study privately under Sir Philip Ben Greet. She played Rosalind on Broadway and toured with Ben Greet's Pastoral Players from 1912 to 1914 in such roles as Viola in Twelfth Night on the Chautauqua Circuit. One of her most famous appearances was in the same role at London's Royal Vic in 1918 when she replaced Viola Tree. She was the first Canadian to play at this theatre. By this time she was the wife of a Canadian army padré, the Reverend Francis Moore, and the mother of one son.

Mrs. Moore returned to Toronto after the war to live as the wife of an Anglican parson and bring up her family, but the theatre continued to beckon. During the 1920's she appeared locally at the Royal Alexandra and at Hart House Theatre in such roles as the Countess Kathleen, Viola, and Lady Capulet. In this decade she began her long career as a director and producer, working with such groups as the Margaret Eaton School and the St. James Cathedral Community Players.

In the 1930's she directed productions by the University of Toronto Extension Players, the Hart House Touring Players, the Toronto Public Library Dramatic Club, and the University College Players, as well as various church and school sponsored groups. In her struggle to create a strong local theatre in Toronto Mrs. Moore was encouraged by enthusiasts like Professor G. Wilson Knight, who himself both acted and directed; Healey Willan, who became her music consultant; his wife, Gladys Willan, who composed and arranged the music used in her productions; and Arthur Lismer, who turned his artistic eye to costume design. During this decade Mrs. Moore was able to travel and study in Britain and on the Continent. Undoubtedly her most stimulating experience was meeting her father's friend, W.B. Yeats, one of the founders of Ireland's

National Theatre Society. As Yeats' house guest in Ireland in 1937, Dora Mavor Moore was inspired by his example to begin her long fight for an indigenous Canadian theatre.

Back in Canada in the late thirties, drawing upon the actors whom she had been directing previously — chiefly students from Forest Hill High School and the University — she formed the Village Players. For two years before the Second World War this group functioned as a touring company, visiting high schools and staging the Shakespeare plays currently on the curriculum. Although many of her actors left during the war years, Mrs. Moore managed to keep the group going, performing for the armed forces, or, very often, in "The Barn", a building on her own property at 2600 Bathurst St. Equipped with a small stage and lighted by oil lamps, the small theatre had seats for eighty people "if you counted the rafters". Here were staged, among other ambitious projects, Canadian premieres of plays by Lorca and Brecht.

Mrs. Moore found another eager group in the Victoria College Dramatic Society. She directed four plays for the College between 1943 and 1946, including She Stoops to Conquer and The Taming of the Shrew. Actors from this last 1946 production included Donald Harron, David Gardner, and Pegi Brown, who would all become stalwart supporters of her next project, and most ambitious venture yet. The War had ended in 1945 and many men and women returning to Canada from service in the armed forces wished to make the theatre their profession and to do so without again leaving the country. When the Royal Ontario Museum announced that it would make its small auditorium available if Mrs. Moore would contribute stage equipment, she jumped at the opportunity. Using her own small savings for the equipment, and drawing on her Village Players and University students for her casts, she created the New Play Society.

THE FIRST SEASON (CASE 2)

The first season of the New Play Society opened at the Royal Ontario Museum Theatre on Friday night, October 11, 1946, with a production of J.M. Synge's Playboy of the Western World. It remains a memorable production, not only because it was the first N.P.S. presentation, but because the play was directed and produced with great care for authenticity, considerable attention having been lavished on the difficult dialect which is an integral part of the drama. Other plays chosen for that first season were: Auguste Strindberg's The Father; Lady Precious Stream, a traditional Chinese play staged in Chinese with authentic Chinese dress by the Gin Hong Sing Dramatic Society; Somerset Maugham's The Circle; Eugene O'Neill's Ah, Wilderness!; and the Coventry Nativity Play. These six plays ran for the autumn season each being staged four times — on Friday and Saturday nights on a fortnightly basis.

For the next five series of plays the New Play Society followed the pattern established by this first series in an attempt to introduce a variety of material to its audiences. At least one British play was always included, as well as one American, one translation, one foreign language play, one classical revival, and one "free-choice". As much as possible, it was hoped that the "free-choice" play could be Canadian and that the Canadian play could be inserted without occasioning the apparently inevitable drop in audience attendance that seemed to accompany a native effort.

J. Mavor Moore, who had joined the company soon after its inception as production manager, wrote in August 1947 of the first year's work: "We chose plays that our audience had not seen locally or might not be expected to see at our local 'Road Theatre' [the Royal Alexandra Theatre]. We believed it essential during this first 'round' to choose our own ground; we avoided comparison with the 'Royal Alex' and with Hollywood, conscious that our threadbare underwear would show the minute we allowed the audience to think of the opulence of New York productions."

The nucleus of the N.P.S. was the older group, the Village Players, now augmented by former members who had been in the armed forces. Added to this group were other returned soldiers, University of Toronto students, Mrs. Moore's former students, and the members of a growing group of Canadians who were engaged in CBC radio work. Everyone had an additional occupation and income, but because of Mrs. Moore's fierce insistence on professionalism, each member, whether actor, technical assistant, or administrative personnel, was paid a token salary of fifteen dollars per play.

The smallness of the Royal Ontario Museum Theatre presented many problems, both aesthetic and financial. The stage was cramped and badly lighted. The theatre seated only 435. Nevertheless the audience, even those who, in true Canadian style, expected the worst from all Canadian productions, were beguiled in spite of themselves by the skill and spirit of the productions; and the Canadian critics soon warmed to the N.P.S. A second series was immediately planned for the winter, beginning in January, 1947.

This time Mrs. Moore led off with Mr. Bolfry, a witty Scottish play by James Bridie. The author, who, in private life was Osborne Mavor, Dora Mavor Moore's first cousin, was chairman of the Glasgow Citizens' Theatre which had similar aims to those of the New Play Society. The American choice, following immediately on Mr. Bolfry's heels, was William Saroyan's The Time of Your Life, directed by Fletcher Markle, with Markle himself and many future Canadian stars appearing in the cast. A bold production of Ronald Duncan's verse drama, This Way to the Tomb, with music by Benjamin Britten, was the third production of the series, followed by a translation of Gogol's The Government Inspector. At this point Mrs. Moore was able to introduce her first all-Canadian play, Lister Sinclair's The Man in the Blue Moon,

produced by Sinclair himself. Mrs. Moore's choice for the final production for this series brought to Toronto the first-rate French-Canadian Company, Les Compagnons de St. Laurent, who played two Molière comedies: Le Médicin Malgré Lui and Les Précieuses Ridicules. These plays, performed in May, 1947, brought to an end a daring and innovative first season.

The calibre of actors who became members of the N.P.S. during this first season can be seen from the cast list for The Time of Your Life. The names include Fletcher Markle, John Drainie, Frank Willis, Alfred Scopp, George Luscombe, Mavor Moore, Glenn Burns, Jean Cruchet, Peter Mews, Don Harron, Robert Christie, Lorne Greene, Alex McKee, Sandra Scott, Pegi Brown, Marion Misener, Jane Mallett and Fred Mallett. The New Play Society was already losing money but it was also attracting top stars and future powerful friends.

SUBSEQUENT PRODUCTIONS (CASE 3)

One month before the opening of the New Play Society's third series in the Autumn of 1947, J. Mavor Moore wrote: "We set out last year to drive home some points; we lost financially but we feel it was worth it; This year we want to consolidate our position, to 'dig in' so to speak, and to make ourselves thoroughly solvent, which we hope to do without lowering the standard of play or presentation." The company courageously plunged into another adventurous season. Beginning with Barrie's What Every Woman Knows, they proceeded to do Macbeth, Charley's Aunt, Juno and the Paycock, Amphitryon and the Coventry Nativity Play, a most varied and difficult season.

Series four opened in January 1948 with Shaw's Candida, starring Jane Mallett in the title role. The part of James Mavor Morell was played by James Mavor Moore. Shaw had made no bones about having "stolen" the name of Professor James Mavor, an old friend and enemy, for the character in the play, and the idea of casting Professor Mavor's grandson in the part was irresistible. To add further relish to the "in-joke", a portrait of Professor Mavor formed part of the stage décor and can be seen in a photograph of the N.P.S. production.

The fourth series, while turning out some very worthwhile plays in its brief four months' run — The Little Foxes, The Tempest, Uncle Harry and School for Scandal as well as Candida — is now mainly remembered for the company's first production of Spring Thaw. A group of all-Canadian satirical sketches hastily compiled when a projected Canadian play failed to materialize, this show and its successors made theatre history and are affectionately remembered by most Torontonians over the age of forty.

The fifth series opened strongly in September 1948 with Maxwell Anderson's Joan of Lorraine, starring Mona O'Hearne and Lorne Greene,

already a well known figure in Canadian radio and theatre. The season continued with Shaw's You Never Can Tell, James Bridie's Storm in a Teacup, and Morley Callaghan's To Tell the Truth. Following this Canadian success, the Society presented a remarkable double-bill comprising Oedipus the King, in an English translation by W.B. Yeats, and Sheridan's The Critic. The season ended with a hilarious new Spring Thaw, which was already becoming the chief N.P.S. money-making event. Mavor Moore's intention of achieving financial solvency had been realized but in a very unexpected way. A satiric review had certainly not been part of the founder's original plan.

1949 brought another first for the N.P.S. and for Canadian theatre. A Christmas pantomime, Mother Goose, was compiled by Mavor Moore. It was staged by Eric Christmas in the English tradition, but was completely Canadian in its production. The choreography was by Betty Oliphant, who was thus introduced to stage work in Canada. This led to Miss Oliphant and Boris Volkoff working with the N.P.S. on future productions.

This pioneer production was followed by further pantomimes: Babes in the Wood, Christmas 1951, in which Giselle Mackenzie made her first professional appearance; Peter Pan, Christmas 1952; and Cinderella, 1953, in which Robert Goulet appeared as a footman. Some of the charming costume designs by Suzanne Mess for the latter play are still extant.

CANADIAN PLAYS (CASE 4)

The sixth series opened at the Royal Ontario Museum in September 1949 with Who's Who, which was billed as "a new comedy by Mavor Moore". Starring such N.P.S. stalwarts as Margot and Robert Christie, Toby Robins and Donald Harron, as well as Lorne Greene, this was a worthy successor to the two earlier N.P.S. all-Canadian efforts. Lister Sinclair's The Man in the Blue Moon had been the company's first Canadian play produced in May 1947; and the second, Morley Callaghan's To Tell the Truth, had achieved conspicuous success in January 1947. Produced and directed by Mavor Moore, the latter play ran at the ROM Theatre from January 14 - 22, and at the Royal Alexandra from February 7 - 11 — the first Canadian play to achieve this distinction.

While the sixth series was to include more Canadian content than any previous N.P.S. venture, Mrs. Moore, true to her original principle, continued to have a strong admixture of the classics. After Who's Who in September, the N.P.S. continued the season with She Stoops to Conquer and Ibsen's Ghosts. In November, however, the Society returned to Canadian themes with The Inheritance. Nathan Cohen, reviewing the Canadian theatrical scene in 1959, said of it: "Harry Boyle dug into his bag of personal observation to tell, convincingly and modestly, in The Inheritance, a conflict of two generations of farmers in Southern Ontario after the first World War." The production, directed by Robert Christie, was well acted by the strong cast which was by this

time a hall-mark of all N.P.S. presentations. It included Frank Peddie, Toby Robins, Margot Christie, Don Harron, John Drainie and Pegi Brown.

Christmas 1949 saw the successful Canadian pantomime, Mother Goose, presented at the Royal Alexandra; and the New Year began with another Canadian premiere, Narrow Passage, by Andrew Allen. Allen, one of Canada's best known radio playwrights and producers, was able to direct his own play with moderate success. February brought a Shaw production, Heartbreak House; but Mrs. Moore, hoping that the growing audience was ready for more Canadian material, was already planning the next production — John Coulter's Riel. Riel, despite the drama surrounding his life, proved then, as now, impossible to capture in a play. In a letter to Mrs. Moore, Coulter admitted that the strangeness and complexity of the man's character made the author's task daunting. The staging on the vast scale which Coulter required also proved beyond the abilities of the N.P.S., despite the efforts of the director (Donald Harron), the technical assistant (Robert Christie), and a very strong cast which included Harron as Thomas Scott, Christie as Sir John A. Macdonald, and Mavor Moore as Riel.

Equally valiant was the March attempt to stage King Lear. The company was short on time for rehearsals, but the show went on anyway. It was followed by Morley Callaghan's play, Going Home, a study of a young man's efforts to find himself. A new Spring Thaw, by now an established tradition, and this year running for four weeks, brought down the curtain on the N.P.S.'s most ambitious and controversial year since its beginning.

This 1950 season ended the N.P.S.'s formal "series". A great deal had been accomplished. The Society had built up a fanatically devoted audience; productions had grown from the two-night stands of the opening season to one and often two week runs. The staging might occasionally be weak or the lead (as in the case of King Lear) might have laryngitis; but, as Nathan Cohen, for years an observer, critic and friend of the N.P.S., said, these flaws did not really matter, for "there was a passion in the N.P.S., an artistic focus, and an elated rage for identity." The work of the N.P.S. would continue. Not only would the Society go on producing both the classics and new Canadian plays, but there would be a new emphasis on a N.P.S. school where students could be trained for the future. There were many new avenues to be explored, often with remarkable success.

SPRING THAW (CASE 5)

The New Play Society is most frequently associated with the annual satiric review, Spring Thaw, which it produced every spring from 1948 to 1960. The first Spring Thaw was presented in 1948 as the fifth production in the Society's fourth series of six plays. It had been

concocted as a last minute substitute for an uncompleted dramatization by Hugh Kemp of Hugh Maclennan's novel, Two Solitudes. Andrew Allan suggested the title and, as the program notes for the 1952 version explain, the idea was "that Spring Thaw each year uncovered a motley assortment of items, as the snow left and revealed what had been going on all winter. This gave us carte blanche to do a 'review' of the Canadian scene during the winter, an accident which led to the show's being called ever after a 'Review' rather than a mere 'Revue'".

The first cast included Eric Christmas, Don Harron, Jane Mallett, Peter Mews, Mavor Moore, Alfie Scopp, Tommy Tweed, and Connie Vernon, several of whom had also contributed sketches. Music was by Mavor Moore and Lucio Agostini and Lister Sinclair contributed the words to the opening song, "We All Hate Toronto". This first Spring Thaw was staged at the ROM Theatre for three nights, from April 1 to 3, 1948. On the second night the N.P.S. was unable to cope with the crowds. Spring Thaw '49 ran for two weeks. Each succeeding year the show's popularity increased until, in 1954, it achieved the longest run that an all Canadian production had enjoyed in Canada up to that time. The City of Toronto gave the N.P.S. a special citation to mark the occasion of Spring Thaw's record-breaking thirty-fourth performance on April 18, 1954.

The continuing success of Spring Thaw brought financial stability to the Society but created other difficulties. There was a division among the Directors as to the emphasis which the Society should place on a satiric review and a fear that because this commercial enterprise demanded six months of steady work in the Society's offices, the original aims of the Society were being eclipsed. Yet Spring Thaw over the years did provide a showcase for numerous Canadian performers and writers and, especially in the show's later years when it toured the country, enabled them to gain national recognition and appreciation. Among others, Dave Broadfoot, Pegi Brown, Don Francks, Robert Goulet, Barbara Hamilton, Don Harron, Lou Jacobi, Norman Jewison, Andrew Macmillan, Jane Mallett, Peter Mews, Mavor Moore, Alfie Scopp, Jean Templeton, and Connie Vernon all made regular appearances in the Spring Thaw's of the 1950's and early 1960's. Many of these actors also contributed sketches and songs. With the exception of one or two productions every Spring Thaw up to the end of the fifties contained numerous sketches by Don Harron and by the amazingly prolific Mavor Moore, who also contributed musical numbers, and often directed or produced entire shows himself. Dave Broadfoot was another constant contributor from 1954 on, and in the later 1950's additional material was regularly written by Pierre Berton and Johnny Wayne. Much of the music continued to be composed or arranged by Lucio Agostini, who had helped create songs for the first show. Both Bobby Gimby and Godfrey Ridout also contributed songs to productions in the fifties. By 1957 Alan Lund was staging the dance numbers and continued as choreographer into the mid 1960's, when he joined Mavor Moore as co-director for the 1964 show. In the early years "decor" was handled by the versatile Peter Mews (who also appeared in every single Spring Thaw production from its

inception to the mid sixties, as well as contributing a large number of sketches to shows in the fifties). By 1955 costumes were being designed by Suzanne Mess who also continued to work on Spring Thaw into the sixties. In fact, there were few names connected with Canadian theatrical endeavour during this period which did not appear at some point on a program for Spring Thaw.

In 1961 the rights to Spring Thaw were sold to Mavor Moore who produced the next four shows himself and then leased the review to various independent producers. Spring Thaw, however, was really a phenomenon of the fifties. Although a revival of several sketches from earlier shows, entitled The Best of Spring Thaw, successfully toured the country in 1964, the annual show was not able to maintain in the later sixties the same success and rapport with its audiences which it had achieved in the previous decade, and in 1971 it formally expired, along with the Society which had created it.

THEATRE COURSES (CASE 6)

Dora Mavor became a teacher the day she began helping with children's theatre classes at the Central Neighborhood House in Toronto in 1908. Her warmth, her zest for life, her enthusiasm for the theatre, and of course, in later years, her vast knowledge and experience, made her a natural teacher.

Her love of children led her to teach wherever she was working or living. She taught children drama in New York in 1913-14 at Old Trinity Church in the Bowery. In Chicago in 1913 she assisted Jane Addams at Hull House with children's classes; and it was natural that in Britain during World War I she would assist Maude Royden teaching children at the City Temple, London. Back in Canada, she taught at the Margaret Eaton School of Literature and Expression in the 20's, at Dr. Blatz's Windy Ridge School in 1928-30, and at St. Mildred's College, 1930-31. She felt strongly that the drama was often the key to the development of creativity in the child. In 1929 she began to teach adults at the Department of Extension at the University of Toronto. From then on she was active in teaching and directing people of all ages.

When the New Play Society School was opened in 1950, it was in response to the growing demand for actors. The coming of television changed many people's lives, but none more than those of Canadian actors. Many, including the New Play Society members, who had gamely made a living by any means at all in order to act at night or on the week-ends, were suddenly television stars. All Mrs. Moore's trained actors were much in demand, and there was a pressing need for a new crop of actors. She decided to create the New Play Society School, with herself as its only teacher and just five students. So overwhelming was the response that soon the school was turning down applicants. When it closed its doors in 1968 it had a staff of nine and a student enrolment of 200.

The school hoped to provide instruction for those interested in a professional career in the theatre, and also to enable others to find a means of self expression. Courses included acting, mime, speech, fencing, make-up, and play direction. A 1964-65 brochure offers additional activities such as courses in playwriting, theatre management and administration, and special classes for deaf students. The school's students ranged from young children to adults, and courses were offered at beginning, senior and advanced levels.

When the N.P.S. ran into financial difficulties in 1956, a decision was made to limit all activities except those of the school. By now it was established as the major English speaking drama school in Canada. In 1956 Lyn Cook, a writer of children's books and teacher of children's drama, became a permanent member of the staff. She not only directed the juvenile department but also wrote fourteen plays for the school. Under Miss Cook the school began to put on its own productions. Our Town was staged at the Central Library Theatre, and an evening of one-act plays at the ROM. Each term the members of Miss Cook's class wrote their own plays and produced them at the Heliconian Club and at the school. Frequently a play was preceeded by a demonstration in mime, staged by Rudy Linschoten, a former student of Marcel Marceau who had voluntarily joined the staff. Other staff members associated with the school's later years included Gordon Alderson (play reading and acting), Allan Beeson (stage management and lighting), Dorothy Ogden (music), Eileen Parsons (drama and speech), later replaced by Marie Lisle, Pat Tomey (language) and Dennis Sweeting (broadcasting and lecturing). Mr. Sweeting also served as president of the N.P.S.

The school survived various moves. It seemed to be settled at the Boris Volkoff building at Bloor and Yonge, but was obliged to move in 1955. The Avenue Theatre at Avenue Rd. and Eglinton was rented for 1956-57, and several courses were given there, but the owners sold it to make way for a parking lot. The next home that the N.P.S. found was the old Moulton College at 88 Bloor St. E. This seemingly ideal location was unfortunately in the path of the new subway and had to be sacrificed. Temporary offices were taken at 38 Asquith Ave. and in the fall of 1962 the last move was made to 224 Bloor St. W. Here at last there were adequate administrative offices, class room space and a small studio theatre built by the parents of students. Nothing but the determination and faith of the founder of the school had carried it through these numerous uprootings and vicissitudes to flourish in its final home.

The New Play Society sponsored several excellent courses in connection with the theatre, some in cooperation with the Canadian Association for Adult Education. A list of them includes: Television production, a six week course offered in 1955 by Mavor Moore; Canadian plays and playwrights, lectures delivered at the Avenue Theatre by Andrew Allan, Lister Sinclair, Herbert Whittaker, Mavor Moore, Nathan Cohen and Robertson Davies; New Directions in Canadian Theatre, given

at the old Moulton College in 1958; and Administration and Theatre Management in 1965. This last course was the first of its kind offered in Canada and was subsidized by a grant from the Ontario Council for the Arts. The lecturers were: Victor Polley and John Hayes of the Stratford Shakespearean Festival; Michael Gelinas of the Comédie canadienne, Montreal; Tom Hendry, formerly of the Manitoba Theatre Centre; Hugh Walker of the O'Keefe Centre and Ed Mirvish of the Royal Alexandra Theatre.

SPECIAL PROJECTS (CASE 7)

In 1952 the New Play Society, in conjunction with the Ontario Branch of the Canadian Mental Health Association, began to create and stage short plays in an attempt "to convey the principles of mental health education ... in a most acceptable form ... through the medium of live drama and good theatre." Interested groups throughout central Ontario, including Home and School Clubs, Service Clubs, and church organizations, were able to utilize the series of plays which the N.P.S. devised and presented with professional casts, for the token fee of $25.00 plus expenses. Following each play, a panel of speakers from the Canadian Mental Health Association led a discussion period with the audience. Such presentations were often money raising occasions as well as educational experiences for the members of the organizations and audience. Eventually nine different plays were developed, dealing with such problems as the disciplining of preschool children; conflict between parents and adolescents; sibling jealousy; teenage problems, and family dissensions. A play dramatizing the difficulties of old age, entitled The Best is Yet to Be, was especially written for the series by Nathaniel Benson. Over one hundred performances of the various plays were given throughout Ontario from 1952 to 1960.

Mrs. Moore considered one of the most meaningful achievements of her career to be the pioneering work she did at the Ontario Hospital in Whitby. Requested by its superintendent Dr. D.R. Fletcher, who believed in the therapeutic value of drama for the mentally ill, Mrs. Moore assisted in the production of two pageants. In December of 1955, she directed a series of Nativity tableaux, and in May 1956, an Easter pageant, entitled The Way of the Spirit. One hundred and two patients acted and sang in the latter, and numerous others took part, devising the scenery, props, and lighting effects. The program was also televised by the CBC.

In 1959 the Canada Council gave $7500.00 toward another N.P.S. project — the Director's Stage series. "In this new venture", wrote Mrs. Moore in November 1959, "leading Canadian directors have chosen unusual contemporary plays." The directors were given complete freedom of choice in play and direction and the casts included both professional actors and students of the N.P.S. School. The first play,

André Obey's Noah, was directed by Herbert Whittaker; the second, Brecht's Caucasian Chalk Circle, by George McCowan, fresh from directing at Stratford, Ontario; and the third, Anouilh's Legend of Lovers, by the youthful Leon Major. Not only did the chosen directors benefit from this project, but Toronto theatre-goers who might have had few chances to see Anouilh or Brecht on stage were given a glimpse of contemporary drama.

One of the original aims of the N.P.S. had been to produce as many Canadian plays as possible. The series of plays which ran from 1946 to 1950 had included six original Canadian plays. The tradition continued with a production at the ROM Theatre in September 1953 of the London West End hit, Mistress of Jalna, by Mazo De La Roche. Other successful N.P.S. Canadian productions in the 1950's included Mavor Moore's musicals: Sunshine Town, based on Stephen Leacock's work, staged at the Royal Alexandra in 1955, and later going on tour, and The Optimist, a version of Voltaire's Candide, presented at the Avenue Theatre in 1956. Turvey, a play adapted by Donald Harron from Earle Birney's novel of the same name, was also successfully presented at the Avenue in 1957.

In October, 1962 Mrs. Moore organized an evening of Canadian one act plays comprising Time Running Out, by Clare Coupal; There I Go, by George Blackburn; and The Theatre of Neptune in New France, by Marc Lescarbot. The care lavished on the production of this last play was typical of Mrs. Moore's devotion both to the theatre and to Canada's past. The original play, written in 1606, was the first recorded piece of theatre performed in North America. In an effort to recreate the French régime, period music was used, after consultation with Sir Ernest MacMillan and Marius Barbeau, while the delightful costume designs by Marie Day attest to its authenticity.

ACCOLADES (CASE 8)

The first recognition and celebration of Dora Mavor Moore's achievement occurred when the N.P.S. held its tenth anniversary in December 1955. Telegrams poured in from all over the world, congratulating Mrs. Moore on her achievement and "on the miracle of survival" despite her serious financial worries, and encouraging her to continue her work.

In 1960, during another low point in the career of the N.P.S., she was to receive an affectionate letter from Sir Tony Guthrie, which became one of her most treasured possessions. He wrote: "No temporary reversal of fortune can alter the fact that you, almost single-handed, kept a lamp burning in the temple for many years. Do have faith that that is known to all the people whose gratitude and estimation you would truly value. Even if your life's work may, to a myopic view, appear just now to be in ruins, those ruins have been productive of more of what is significant in Canada of the theatre we both believe in passionately."

In 1967 her own country began to realize how much it owed to her devotion to the theatre in Canada, and she was presented with the Centennial Medal for services to the nation. In the same year the B'nai B'rith Toronto Chapter named her "Woman of the Year."

In 1969 a university ouside Canada honoured her. She was made a Doctor of Fine Arts (D.F.A.) honoris causa, by the Western College for Women, Oxford, Ohio.

In 1970 the University of Toronto presented her with an honorary LL.D. at its June convocation. In the same year she became an officer of the Order of Canada. These two latter awards must have been particularly gratifying to her. Her devotion to the university where her father had taught for so many years and where she and her brothers had deposited her father's papers was well known; and her patriotism and loyalty to Canadian theatre made the O.C. especially appropriate.

In 1971 the City of Toronto appointed November 30th Dora Mavor Moore Day. A splendid tribute to her was paid that evening at the St. Lawrence Centre, when friends gathered for a program which included, besides the congratulatory speeches, and messages from N.P.S. alumnae and Stratford personnel, excerpts from past N.P.S. productions. The proceeds raised from that evening went into a fund which had been set up the previous month at the time of the surrender of the N.P.S. charter — the Dora Mavor Moore Fund. This fund is designed "to provide for prizes, scholarships or bursaries to persons engaged in the production of plays of Canadian authorship." The term "production" is extended to include writers, directors, designers, and technical personnel. Thus her name lives on, and Dora Mavor Moore will be remembered in the way that would please her most, as a continuing benefactor to the Canadian theatrical tradition.